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Strategic Management for successful leadership- A study with reference to Epic Bhagavad Gita

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Abstract:

Success of any organization or society largely depends on efficient leaders. Most leaders strive their best to give right direction and motivation to their teams and contribute for individual, societal and organizational objective. While there are many versions of how leaders tend to influence and motivate teams and many modern and scientific theories have been profound, the study lays focus on the Epic Bhagavad Gita which laid various mythological evidences on effective and strategic leadership which are still prominent and appropriate for contemporary world. Critical analysis has been made to comprehend the various strategies that has been incorporated by Lord Krishna as how leadership is compiled righteously and efficiently with effective decision making. The study also emphasis on qualities and managerial abilities that a leader should possess like knowing one's self, motivating and inspiring, decision-making power, ethical dilemmas. The Epic Bhagavad Gita can be a one-point reference for many leaders on how righteously critical decisions can be made for the success of any organization or society as a whole.

Key Words: Ethical leadership- Philosophical – Modern theories of Management – Decision Making-Dynamism in Business or society

Leadership is the art of leading a group of people or teams so that the goals are achieved efficiently. It is the ability of an individual to influence and guide followers or members of an organization, society or team.

Potential leaders are found and required in most aspects of society, including business, politics, religion and social- and community-based organizations. Leaders are seen as people who make sound and sometimes difficult decisions. They articulate a clear vision, establish achievable goals and provide followers with the knowledge and tools necessary to achieve those goals.

Leadership plays a crucial role in the success and direction of any business, teams, society.. Organizations largely depends on successful leaders to communicate its mission, vision and

goals, unite team members around those goals and then achieve them. These capabilities are especially important in times of crisis.

Timely decision-making is often required for the success and evolution of any business. Businesses too depend on leaders with high competencies and emotional intelligence to make tough decisions and solve problems. This level of trust and success often leads to positive, productive work environments that encourage teamwork, employee well-being and strong work cultures that are attractive to top talent.

Strong leadership is critically essential to an organization's competitiveness as it drives change and innovation. The best leaders keep an eye on the dynamic changes in and around and promote new ideas from within their organization and bring in innovative thinkers.

Leaders should be resilient in their actions and should not be weakened by pain and pleasure. Selfish desires and animosity obscure the purpose of leadership. Leaders achieve lasting power and glory by exercising compassion and selfless service. Effective leaders do not lead by fear or anger. They lead their teams with empathy, courage and team approach. They stimulate self esteem among team members and strive for accomplishment of goals. Negative leadership qualities such as lack of courage, lack of empathy, non-collaborative approach, lack of resilience, short-term approach, low self control (greed, anger, pleasure-seeking), muddled thinking, inability to prioritize, inability to think creatively all lead to non-cooperation from team. Murky politics, poor lifestyle, stress related illnesses etc. are inabilities to effective leadership. Effective leadership traits are projected by Lord Sri Krishna in Mahabharatha. This ancient text has never been studied in the leadership context. If we look closely, the wisdom of the Bhagavad Gita contains many leadership lessons that are similar to contemporary leadership theories and practices. Many contemporary leadership topics such as emotional intelligence, situational leadership, character and integrity were already discussed in the Bhagavad Gita thousands of years ago. These topics were discussed in a philosophical context, as management science as we know today did not exist then. It is also intriguing to find other management concepts embedded in the Gita. Thousands of years before Frederick W. Taylor defined work and worker, and Peter

F. Drucker defined knowledge and knowledge worker, the topics of work and knowledge were already in the Bhagavad Gita. Written thousands of years ago, the Gita offers valuable management lessons that are still applicable in today's dynamic business environment.

Importance of Self-Awareness: The Bhagavad Gita emphasizes the importance of self-awareness as the foundation of effective leadership. In Chapter 13, verse 8, Lord Krishna advises Arjuna, "He who knows the soul to be the doer of all actions truly sees." True leadership begins with understanding one's own strengths, weaknesses, values, and motivations that lead us to take better decisions, communicate more effectively, and inspire others to reach their full potential.

Ethical Conduct: Ethics and integrity are crucial aspects of successful leadership. The Gita emphasizes the importance of ethical conduct and righteousness. In Chapter 16, verse 3: "Arrogance, pride, anger, conceit, harshness, and ignorance- these qualities belong to those of

demonic nature.”

It highlights the need for leaders to cultivate qualities such as humility, compassion, fairness, and honesty. Leading with ethical principles helps managers build trust, foster a positive work culture, and inspire their teams to achieve greater heights.

The Art of Trust and Decision-Making: One of the most critical phases in the battlefield of Kurukshetra is where Arjuna is faced with a moral dilemma and is unsure of his duty. Lord Krishna advises him on the importance of making informed decisions without attachment to the outcomes. Chapter 17, shloka 28th of Bhagavad Geeta says that whatever we do without faith is useless. So before taking any decision always think that does it seem right to you and do you have a strong belief in it. Believe and faith are two very strong pillars with which one can even move mountains. This teaching has profound implications for modern leaders who often face complex and uncertain situations. The Gita encourages managers to make decisions based on a deep understanding of the situation, considering various perspectives, and being detached from personal biases and ego.

Nurturing a Learning Culture: Continuous learning and growth are essential for both individuals and organizations. The Gita emphasizes the importance of a learning mindset in Chapter 2, verse 50: “A man of wisdom is steadfast in knowledge, and a man of steady knowledge is steadfast in wisdom.” This verse suggests that leaders should cultivate a culture of continuous learning, where individuals are encouraged to acquire new skills, adapt to change, and embrace innovation. By fostering a learning environment, leaders can create resilient teams capable of navigating challenges and seizing opportunities.

Inspiring and Motivating Others: Leadership is not just about managing tasks; it is about inspiring and motivating others to achieve common goals for a purposeful action. In the Gita, Lord Krishna encourages Arjuna to perform his duty with utmost devotion and without attachment to the results. Leaders can inspire their teams to navigate through a righteous path with clear cut directions and recognizing and celebrating individual and team achievements. By nurturing a meaningful purpose and enthusiasm, leaders can create high-performing teams. The Bhagavad Gita offers profound management lessons that transcend time and culture. Its teachings on self-awareness, ethical conduct, decision-making, continuous learning, and inspiring others are as relevant for today as they were thousands of years ago. By incorporating these principles into their leadership approach, modern managers can foster positive work cultures, make better decisions, and inspire their teams to achieve extraordinary results. Today’s leaders should undoubtedly incorporate the teachings from Bhagavad Gita and ensure prospective moves in their fields through righteousness thus promoting ethical management. The Gita reminds us that effective leadership is not just about external strategies and techniques but also about the inner transformation of the leader.

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